

# THE ASYLUM

Quarterly Journal of the  
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Volume 29, No. 2

April–June 2011

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## CATALOGUE

OF A PORTION OF THE VERY VALUABLE COLLECTION OF

GREEK, ROMAN, ANGLO-SAXON, SCOTCH

AND

## ENGLISH COINS

Formed by E. SHORTHOUSE, Esq., Member of the  
London Numismatic Society:—Embracing many RARE COINS  
and PATTERN PIECES, which have not been offered to  
PUBLIC COMPETITION FOR SOME YEARS.

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To be Sold by Auction, by

MESSRS.

LUDLOW, ROBERTS & WELLER,

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AT THEIR HOUSE,

No. 18, NEW STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

(Within Three Minutes' walk of New Street Birmingham  
Railway Station),

On MONDAY, the 29th of November, 1886, and  
the Three following days, at *One o'clock prompt*,  
each day.

FOR VIEW DAYS, SEE OVER.

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WATSON AND BALL, PRINTERS, CASTLE STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

“That writer does the most, who gives his reader the *most* knowledge, and takes from him the *least* time.”



CHARLES C. COLTON  
1780-1932

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# The Asylum

Vol. 29, No. 2

Consecutive Issue No. 112

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*Front cover:* Title page of the sale of the Shorthouse collection, 1886, described in this issue by Paul Withers.



## Editor's Introduction

As a number of readers have commented during the last several months, and as the rest of you have undoubtedly noticed, there have been some problems with quality of printing in recent issues of *The Asylum*. Undoubtedly the most egregious of these was the printers' accidental omission of the last four pages from Volume 29 Number 1 earlier this year, which was prepared for press with a total of thirty-two interior pages but was instead mailed to subscribers with only twenty-eight.

Beginning with this issue we are using a different printing company. The change has entailed some delay, but we expect this change to result in better quality, with the possibility as well of some savings in printing costs for the NBS.

Because pages 29–32 of Volume 29 Number 1 never actually appeared in print, despite what the table of contents implied, the present issue begins with page 29 of Volume 29. The article that was on the missing pages is now to be found on pages 48–51 of this issue.

— David Yoon

## The Second United States Mint and *Good Child's Library*

Joel J. Orosz

Images of the second United States Mint tended to turn up, during its 1833–1901 run as the nation's premier coinage facility, in the most peculiar places. In the April–June 2010 issue of *The Asylum*, we discovered an engraving of William Strickland's elegant Grecian temple of Numisma in—of all places—a casket, or more precisely, in *The Casket*, an 1830s literary magazine published in Philadelphia. Now a completely different engraving of the second Mint has surfaced in another unexpected venue, namely a nineteenth-century book of didactic readings for children. While the motivation for including the Mint as the subject for one of its chapters remains obscure, there are some interesting insights to be gleaned from this enigmatic primer.

The book in question carries the succinct, if somewhat awkward, title of *Good Child's Library. Juvenile Sports, Etc.* In an era when full book titles routinely unfolded over half a page or more, agglutinated by phrases such as “In addition to...” or “Together with...” such economy (one might almost say parsimony) of titling must have seemed preternaturally terse. The person ultimately responsible for this shocking departure from convention is not altogether clear, for the book does not name its creator. The bookseller from whom I purchased a copy of *Good Child's Library* identified its author as Richard G. Harrison, but I have been unable to find confirmation of this attribution. No such mystery exists about the publisher, for the title page credits Leavitt & Allen, of New York City, whose driving force, George Ayres Leavitt, was one of the founders of the New York Publishers' Association and a leading antebellum publisher, bookseller, and auctioneer.

If it was indeed Mr. Harrison “whodunit,” there still remains the other important question of “whendunit.” Besides omitting the author's

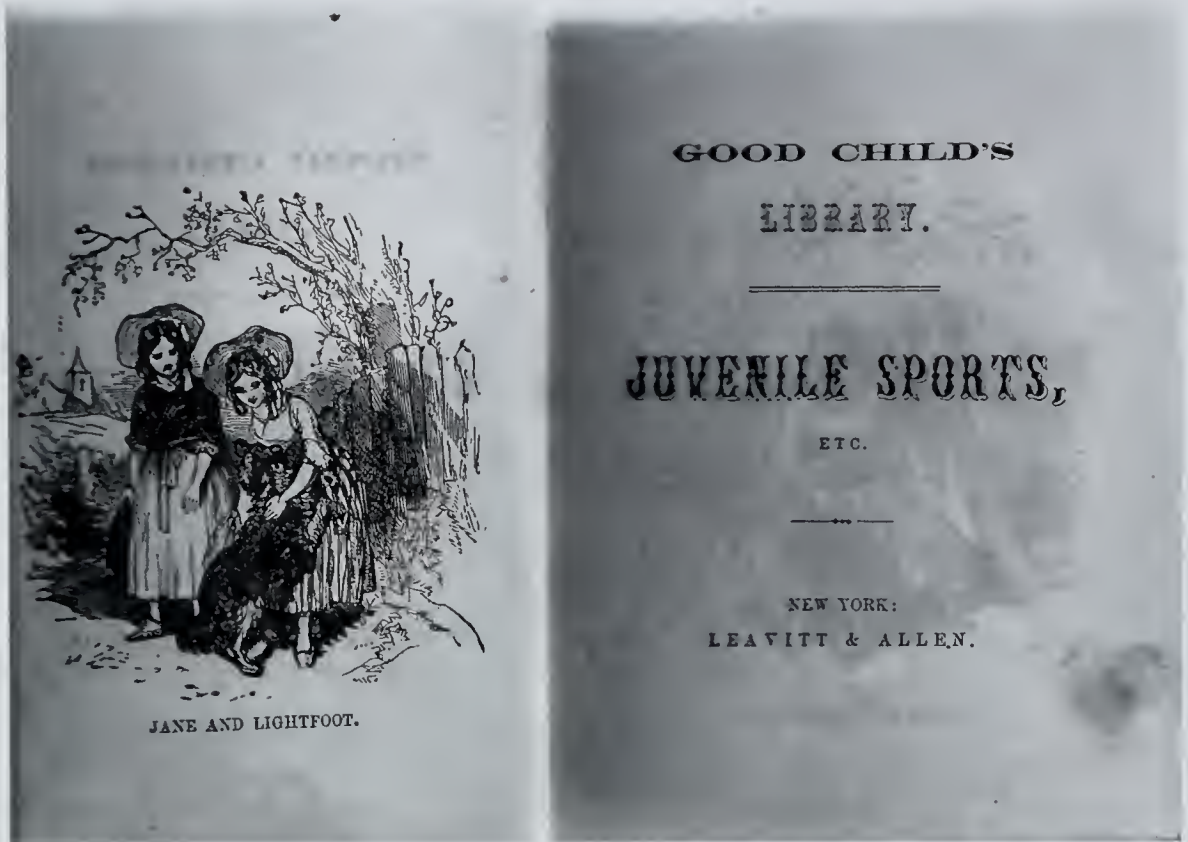


Figure 1.

name, *Good Child's Library* neglects to record a date of publication. The extremes would be from 1831 (recall that the article on the second Mint from *The Casket* was written from architectural plans, and published nearly two years prior to the Mint's 1833 opening), to 1901, the year in which the second Mint yielded place to the third.

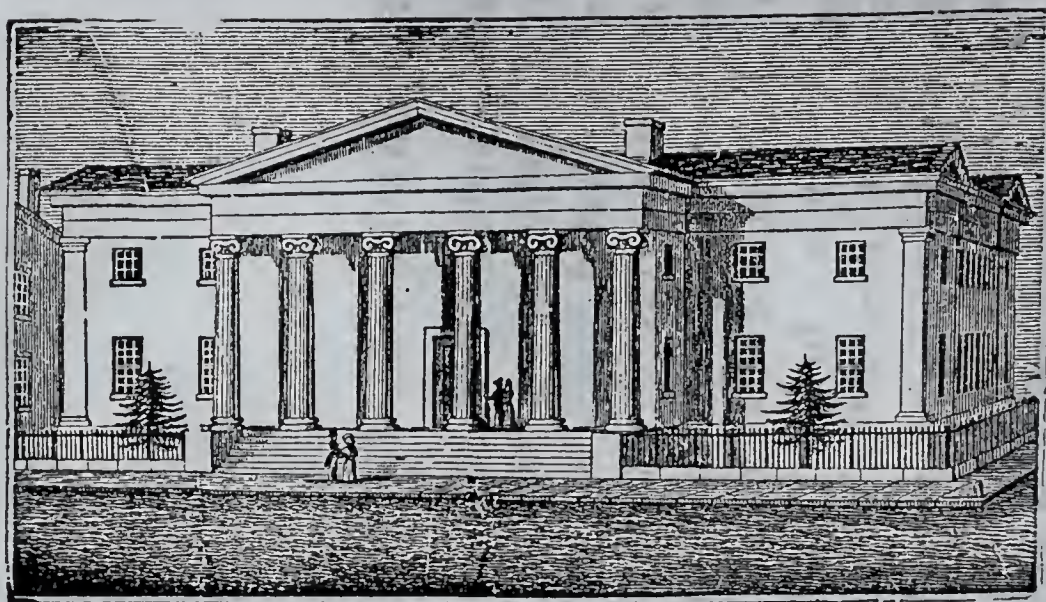
A number of factors, however, militate against either of the extremes being the actual time of publication. The highly didactic prose found in *Good Child's Library* argues more for antebellum than for Gilded Age antecedents. The style of the book's binding, with its blue cloth boards titled and decorated in gilt on the spine, and in blind on the boards, is more reminiscent of 1840s and 1850s publications than those from the 1880s or 1890s. The most compelling consideration is found in the dates of operation of the partnership of Leavitt & Allen, which did business from 1852 until about 1863, thus clearly identifying the range of years during which *Good Child's Library* was published.

There is a reason to suspect that *Good Child's Library* made its appearance closer to the beginning of the eleven-year span of Leavitt & Allen's existence than the end, and that is found in the publication of a series of popular volumes during the early 1850s under the collective

title of *The Good Child's Library*. According to a preamble of one of the books in this series, "The object of *The Good Child's Library* is to encourage a taste for Scripture Reading, by presenting some of the most interesting portions of the New Testament narrative in the attractive form of verse." *The Good Child's Library* series was well received, and sold steadily, so that most of its volumes are readily available on today's antiquarian book market. It seems quite plausible, therefore, that Richard G. Harrison (or whoever was the author), might have sought to capitalize upon the popularity and the spotless moral reputation of *The Good Child's Library* series by naming his own book the sound-alike *Good Child's Library* (narrowly avoiding complete plagiarism of titling by dropping the definite article), and by issuing it in the mid-1850s, at the height of *The Good Child's Library* series run.

If the piggybacking ploy worked, a purchaser expecting to find verse would instead find prose, and those looking for a unified theme of stories from the New Testament would discover that the organization of the stories in *Good Child's Library* was less "Christian thematic" and more "secular chaotic." The topics tumble one upon another, ranging from biographies, to fables, to travelogues, to natural histories, to sentimental parables. The "Story of General Jackson," for example, is joined by "Wandering Morton," "A Visit to Holland," "The Bird's Nest," and "The Beggar Girl."

This pepper pot of 32 chapters may contain a goodly number of emotional ingredients, but the endings are not always happy ones. "The Death of the Father," for example, takes an utterly unflinching view of familial mortality: "To lose a father is often to lose a home; for it is the father who provides the family with shelter, food and clothing, and all those comforts which make home dear." The story focuses on the Torr family, whose father suddenly sickens. Mrs. Torr and "her little daughter Eliza" keep vigil by his bedside, where the doctor informs them that there is no hope of recovery. The twenty-first-century reader wants to see a providential recovery; the nineteenth-century reader was resigned to the inevitability of domestic tragedy. Mr. Torr "...bade Eliza to love and worship God, and obey her mother, and she would lead a happy life. He strove to speak to Mrs. Torr, but choked in the effort, and soon after the last sigh escaped him, and his body was cold in death. Long and deeply did the mother and daughter grieve, but nothing could call Mr. Torr back to life."



THE UNITED STATES MINT.

Figure 2.

Given the presence of such emotional cold showers in *Good Child's Library*, a story about the second Mint of the United States within its pages definitely makes for light and carefree reading. A mere 188 words suffice to tell the story of the Mint, with an annexed engraving, printed somewhat awkwardly in landscape orientation, as opposed to the portrait orientation of the printing. This illustration clearly differs from the one published in *The Casket*, and it can be positively identified as the familiar John Caspar Wild engraving of the second Mint. According to research done by the Philadelphia Print Shop, Ltd., Wild was a Swiss artist who studied in Paris and made a brief first appearance in Philadelphia in 1831. He then went to Cincinnati for six years, and returned to Philadelphia in 1837, entering into a partnership with J.B. Chevalier to publish a series of small lithographs illustrating the architectural highlights of the city of Philadelphia. The prints appeared during 1838 in five monthly numbers of four views each, and after 20 scenes were completed, Wild and Chevalier offered them in a bound volume, entitled *Views of Philadelphia, and Its Vicinity*. The series of lithographs went through three different editions in 1838, and a fourth that was published incrementally from 1840 through 1848. Clearly, the illustration in *Good Child's Library*, and hence the book itself, could not have been published prior to 1838, and it easily could have been published after 1848.

It is not possible to determine which of the four print editions is used in *Good Child's Library*, for any identifying data about the publisher and engraver has been omitted. The basis for the engraving is clearly the Wild lithograph, however, depicting a three-quarters view of one of the Mint's two porticoes, one of which fronted Penn Square, the other facing Chestnut Street. The quality of the engraving, as reproduced in *Good Child's Library*, leaves much to be desired, for Wild's clean lines have been muddled in a rather crude presentation.

If the illustration disappoints, the text surprises. There are hints within the brief article on the Mint suggesting that its author's acquaintance with the institution came at first hand. For example, we learn that "When you enter the Mint, you will see one large hall, with a great number of doors. These doors lead to small rooms in which the work of coining is carried on." Another such observation asserts that "The coining machines are kept clean and polished brightly." Both reports have the ring of details noticed by an observant visitor.

More intriguing, however, are a couple of statements that sound like open advocacy for the Mint and its management. The old bugaboo of high operating costs, which had plagued the institution from its inception, is addressed as follows: "A large number of persons are employed about the Mint, and the wages and salaries for a single week amount to a great sum; but we should remember these persons work for the whole United States." The closing sentence makes one wonder if it might be addressing the early 1850s scandal involving Chief Coiner Franklin Peale, who had been personally profiting from extracurricular work he had ordered his subordinates to perform: "The greatest care is exercised in dealing out the precious metal for coining, and none but responsible persons are employed." Given the reality of Peale's personal profiteering, this sentence sounds like nothing so much as "spin control" from Mint Director James Ross Snowden.

As with so many things about *Good Child's Library*, we will probably never know to what extent the chapter about the Mint was purely primer, and to what extent it was pro-Mint propaganda. What is clear is that an illustrated story of some little importance about the second Mint is sandwiched within the pages of this book between "Searching the Scriptures" and "Benjamin and His Two Goats": a most unlikely venue, indeed. What is also clear is that any bookshelf that purports to hold every book published about the second Mint will need to include this enigmatic and surprising little volume, *Good Child's Library*.

## “You Don’t Say”: Numismatic Quarterly Quiz

*Myron Xenos*

1. What is the difference between “coin aligned” and “medal aligned”?
2. What date is the earliest dated crown-sized coin?
3. What percentage of silver is contained in German Silver?
4. Who was the model for Miss Liberty on the 1921 peace \$1?
5. Name the term for the obverse of one coin combined with the reverse of another.
6. What is a “short snorter”?
7. On which U.S. coin was chain mail added to assuage puritanical art critics?
8. Which British monarch earned the name “Old Coppernose” for debasing silver coinage.
9. Foreign coins circulated freely in the United States until a law was passed removing legal tender status. What year was it?
10. In 1816, only the large cent was produced in Philadelphia at the mint. Why?
11. Easy question! What human body parts were sometimes missing on early screw press operators?
12. What do the initials F.D.C. stand for? (not first-day cover)

# The Shorthouse Catalogue

*Paul Withers*

The job of being a numismatic book dealer is a rewarding one, even if I don't exactly earn a fortune.

In this business it is all too easy to accumulate hoards of material. Let me say that I do not have the problem that many collectors have, of a wife who resents their husband's collection. My wife, whilst perhaps not quite as crazy as I am about books, is very fond of them, and when a freshly-bought library arrives she eagerly and happily helps to catalogue it and put it onto the shelves, either for sale, or onto our library shelves, but there are times when it overflows. It goes into boxes and sits until there is time to deal with it. In this case, the pile of boxes was started about fifteen years ago. Last week it became apparent that something had to be done about it as what had been intended as a verandah has now become a junk storage facility, and there are times when even I realise that if I want to buy more, something has to go!

In this instance, the fifteen-year-old pile had to go, but before that, it had to be sorted and what was saleable had to go for sale on our website ([www.galata.co.uk](http://www.galata.co.uk)). Much of it is junk, or at least, it was fifteen years ago. The pile is large: two cubic yards would not be an exaggeration. I started at one corner and began to work my way downwards and inwards. It consists of things such as a long run (of fairly recent copies) of *The Numismatist* and *Coin Monthly*, that were put to one side just in case someone might want them. If anyone does, please let me know, they are free—but you'll have to pay the carriage, and preferably come to collect them. Now, let me say that fifteen years ago things were different—I didn't rate auction catalogues that highly, but people began to appreciate them, and my attitude has changed towards them as there are now several good customers for them. One box, therefore, brought quite a lot of joy, as many were Sotheby catalogues from the early 1900s, and another was a strange catalogue, which I thought that I would share

with you, as most of those who read *The Asylum* are interested in things American.

It is hard-bound, with a textured, dark blue (nearly black) cover, just over five inches wide and eight and a half inches tall. Whilst obviously of some age, it does not look as old as it is, surviving from 1886. The title page informs us that the collection being sold, that of E. Shorthouse, contained many rare coins that "have not been offered to public competition for some years" (see Figure 1). You will notice that the owner doesn't say for exactly how long the public have been denied the privilege of seeing the delights of his collection.

The full details then begin to come out. This collection is not being sold in London, but Birmingham. Now as we have been wont to observe over the years, living as we did, just 20 miles from England's second city: if a coin or token is rare and interesting and from Birmingham, ignore it, for it will be impossible to sell.

Mr Shorthouse himself did not entirely trust the citizens of Birmingham, for they were informed that only gentlemen presenting their cards would be admitted, and even they were told, politely, that they should keep their thieving hands off as the pieces were to be handled only by the assistants, and not by the person viewing, and lots were to be seen only one at a time. Was the guy paranoid? Perhaps, but read on....

Some of the lots were of United States items. One appears under the heading "Miscellaneous":

Lot 806 : Thirty-one U.S. Copper cents., 1798, 1801, 1802, 1803, 1812, 1814, 1816, 1817, 1818, 1819, 1820, 1822, 1827, 1828, 1832, 1836 (2) 1841, 1842, 1843, 1845, 1849, 1850, 1851, 1852 (brilliant mint) 1853 (2, same state) ; 1854, 1855, 1856, 1857; very difficult to get together 31

Lot 821 does not appear under "Miscellaneous", but comes under the heading "United States of America", which in this instance is not quite correct:

821 Oak and Pine Tree Series, Massachusetts, 1652, Shillings, large blank (4) ; ditto, small blank (2) ; small sizes are ex. rare; Sixpences, fine and very rare (2), one, the oak tree, very rare : three Pence (pine tree) 9

\*\*\* The only trace of these rare small pieces being offered for many years was in Maynard's sale, when a poor Ormonde crown, shilling, and sixpence, (lot 118) a set of four fetched £20.

CATALOGUE  
OF A PORTION OF THE VERY VALUABLE COLLECTION OF  
GREEK, ROMAN, ANGLO-SAXON, SCOTCH  
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Formed by E. SHORTHOUSE, Esq., Member of the  
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FOR VIEW DAYS, SEE OVER.

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WATSON AND HALL, PRINTERS, CASTLE STREET, BIRMINGHAM.

Figure 1.

AFTER THE SALE

What did these lots make? Lot 806 made 10 shillings (just under \$2.50) and lot 821 made 6 pounds, two shillings and sixpence (a little under 30 dollars). Of course, back in 1886, a year before Victoria's golden jubilee, for ten shillings, we are talking about half a sovereign, now worth more than a hundred pounds (\$160) for bullion, and for the Massachusetts silver coins well over \$2000. Spink bought lot 821, though whether for stock or on behalf of a client is not known. Would they still be a bargain nowadays? I suspect that lot 806 would be a raving bargain, but I am not so sure about lot 821.

After the sale, Mr Shorthouse, with an eye to making a bit of money and perhaps to mention his disappointment at the sales results, pub-

lished and bound the sale catalogue with the post-sale results and what might now be found in a blog. He wrote:

The experiment of attempting an important Coin Sale in Birmingham —(there being very few Numismatists in the neighbourhood)—was thought by many to be a bold one. The general excellence and variety of the coins, however, proved attractive. Thanks to the presence of the Leading Dealers [He mentions Mr. Verity, Mr. Lincoln, Messrs. Spink, and Mr. Whelan, all of whom came to the sale.] all went off well.

He then went on to say that some coins established a record, a William IV crown making £20 10s 0d along with the “Three Graces” crown sold for £9 17s 6d. A Queen Anne farthing sold for £19 17s 6d. Was he happy with this? Well, perhaps, but he carried on:

It is not too much to say that several of the coins in this sale will not occur again in our lifetime; and those collectors, – slaves to that most dismal of all slaveries, – routine, – who allowed themselves to be deterred by the bold and original catalogue, – missed many excellent and rare pieces.

In other words, he was telling those who didn’t come to the sale, to swell his coffers, that they had missed the chance of a lifetime.

How did he feel about people on the other side of the Pond? Well, he had evidently not had very good experiences for, apropos of nothing, he continued....

*To American Coin Collectors.  
Stolen,*

from an English Gentleman’s Coin Cabinet, end of April, 1886, a valuable set of “Lord Baltimore” silver money, consisting of the Shilling, Sixpence, and rare Groat, in unusually fine condition.

*The Groat Described.*

A fine, circular coin, unclipped and perfect; the reverse excellent, the hair of the portrait on the obverse rather worn, the face not well struck up, with a peculiar depression or sinking in of the cheek.

*The Thief.*

As some months have now been judiciously allowed to pass by quietly, it is judged that the thief will about now have gained courage

to offer his stolen coins—probably, it is thought, in America. As the above Groat has not been offered to the public for years in America, its sudden appearance this summer will attract attention. Any Private Collector, Auctioneer, or Dealer who may have heard of a fine Baltimore Groat being offered this summer (or in future) is asked to obtain access to, and particularly notice the coin, and to take a rubbing off it. A well-known and respectable English dealer, and the owner, will undertake to identify and swear to this groat for years to come, singling it out in a moment from any number. Rubbings have been retained off it.

*Not The First Time.*

From the adroitness shown by the thief (a worthless U.S. token and another coin being slipped into the space left by the theft, which might otherwise have attracted attention on replacing the cabinet drawer), the detectives consider that this is not the first time this man has purloined coins at gentlemen's houses, and it seems desirable that his family should know that the father is a common thief at large, dangerous to Society. Any person in America or England who gives such information as may bring the theft home shall receive a P.O. order for £5, also a beautiful U.S. 1796 cent., with the cap, in absolutely Mint condition, for his trouble. Address, Mr. E. Shorthouse, 5, Charlotte Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, England, Member of the London Numismatic Society.

*Three Years' American Coin Collecting In England.*

The following experiences, it was thought, might amuse and interest Brother Collectors across the Atlantic, Being in easy circumstances, and lacking the talents of his Brother, whose "John Inglesant" has been so well received in America, travels over the world and various "hobbies" have taken up some twenty years. The last hobby was coin collecting, only commenced in 1881. Five years ago fine coins were to be had at about half present prices, and a tremendous "hoard" was obtained. English, American, Canadian, French, Early German, Manx, &c. The nucleus of the last was Dr. Clay's hoard, sold for a mere song in New York. Coming back—through Mr. Randall—and persistently added to, it now forms (so say the dealers) "The finest collection of Manx (Isle of Man) in the world."

*American Coins.*

As late as 1882 U.S. coins were to be picked up in England very

cheaply, now they very seldom occur. Our ignorance of them was, and still is, in most cases, profound. We considered 5s. a fair price for an uncirculated 1796 cent. (not the humorously called "cabinet friction uncirculated" of the U. S. sales), but absolutely as from the die; like a proof. A very fine 1795 cent., with thick lettered edge, a gentleman had put out of his collection amongst his "wasters." "These," he remarked, "I do not value at anything." They went at one shilling apiece. A lovely 1794 dollar stood for two years in the Bureau de Change" window, Charing Cross Station, London, staring at the British public; the writer could have had it a dozen times at £1. Finally swept off by good Mr. Randall on his last visit to the British Isles. Four or five fine 1796 half-cents. were also waiting in Birmingham for the latter. We considered them worth about half-a-crown; indeed, a fine one came in from Derby while Mr. Randall was in Birnham at the modest price of one shilling!

#### *A Discovery*

Discovery of the Tinique Pattern small Silver "Bit," or "Bill" (1783), of 100 units. Obv., U. S., in wreath, "Libertas, Justitia;" rev., "Nova Constelatia," eye, rays, and stars (size of English sixpence). During his three years' hunt the writer acquired the above "welcome little stranger." Knowing about as much about it as the average Christian knows about the Origin of Evil, he forwarded it to his friend Mr. W. Elliot Woodward, of America, one of those dealers (unfortunately "few and far between") with whom an English gentleman can deal with safety and pleasure. He at once candidly stated that it was "gem!" Although its existence had for years been suspected (ever since Mr. Mickley's sale in 1867), only the dollar and half-dollar had been discovered. Both these are in the grand collection of L. G. Parmelee, Esq., Boston, where the writer trusts his little "Bit" has also found a home.

#### *How 2s. 3d, (55 Cents.) Became £54 (\$272).*

Placed in Mr. W.'s 73rd sale (April, 1885) at the wellmeaning, judicious reserve of \$550 (£110), it finally went off in the 83rd sale, April 27th, 1886 (Lot 1,064), for \$272 (£54). The fact was, it was obtained (with some other small U. S. coins) for 2s. 3d. (55 cents.) from the shop window of T. F. Cloud, Pawnbroker, 207, High Holborn, London. This incident is mentioned as an encouragement to young beginners in numismatics, It is something for a mere novice to add an hitherto unknown example to the coin series of a great Empire.

*"Plums."*

Amongst the hundreds of U.S. coins he has now got together in very beautiful condition only a few "plums" can be mentioned. An "Ameri" cent., in mint condition ; another, fine ; a 1795 cent., thick lettered edge., in absolutely uncirculated state (an extremely rare coin in such a state); a 1796, with cap, in equal condition, resembles a proof; six fine, 1793 cents., with four distinct types of leaves under bust ; 23 cents of 1794, all different types, some in mint state; two fine 1804 cents., the last cost 4 1/2d. (9 cents.) ; a 1799 cent in mint state was just missed at 7s. 6d., which seemed fairly moderate; 1793-4-5 and 1796 half-cents, nearly mint; Rosa Americana sets (mint) ; New England shilling; Annanapolis ditto, very fine; 1796 and 1797 dimes as from the die; a brilliant proof of the 1796 quarter-dollar; Baltimore money (not yet stolen) ; rows of "pine" and "oak tree" money, some very fine ; 1795, &c., silver dollars, in brilliant mint; Bank of Montreal 1838 and '39 (side view of house), in perfect mint state; and an extreme rarity, the "Pitt, No Stamps," cent., in the small half-cent. size, almost mint; one other of these only has occurred in England since he began collecting, namely, a poor one in Frentzel's sale, December, 1881, at Sotherby's, Strand.

*In Conclusion.*

American coins, compared with those of other nations, appear to the writer to be unquestionably the most uninteresting series in the world. No portraits of past Presidents—no historical memories awakened—nothing but rows of coins almost exactly alike, save an interminable row of different dates. The (no doubt) well-meaning, but everlasting, eagle (manipulating a claw full of spears with indifferent success), and the equally interminable Female Portrait (whom no one seems to know, but who, like Queen Victoria, retains her youthful features on the coins, as the ages roll by, in a wondrous manner), are certainly discouraging to a collector. Feeling, therefore, no interest in them, save the financial one, it is suggested that some American gentleman, wishing to acquire a very fine U.S. collection, had better come over next summer (1887)—visit the proposed U.S. Exhibition in London—and take away the collection to that Great and Amazing Country (which the writer visited with such pleasure in 1876), to which it properly belongs, and where it will doubtless be properly appreciated.

## Memories of Katen Auction Sales

*Dave Hirt*

I first got interested in coins about 1948, when on my paper route people sometimes paid me with (strange) money, which was the Barber coinage, dimes, quarters, and half dollars. People who don't remember back that far may be surprised to hear that in those days the half dollar was as common in circulation as the quarter.

Later I found out about the *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* and began to subscribe. I started to buy coins from the ads in it. Later I saw the ads for auction catalogues, sent for them, and started bidding by mail with Stacks, Schulman, Kosoff, Kreisberg, French, etc. I never bid with Mehl, but I did buy coins from his ads. I still have some of these catalogues in my library, but sadly, some I discarded.

Other than buying the *Guide Book* each year, I trace my beginning in numismatic literature to 1965, when in an Abner Kreisberg sale I purchased the Parmelee sale catalogue.

My first notice of Frank Katen was through his ads in the *Scrapbook Magazine*. I probably began bidding in his sales in the late 1960s. In 1974 I moved to Maryland from the Philadelphia area where I had always lived. It was at this time that I started to attend the Katen sales.

The first sale that I attended was in July 1974. I remember that I really enjoyed the live bidding. My top purchase at that sale was a copy of Henry Chapman's John Story Jenks sale. Paul Seitz, a dealer from south central Pennsylvania was at that sale. I talked with him afterward. I said that I had read that he was Tom Elder's son-in-law. He said that was not true, but he was related to Elder through his mother. He said that he had material from the Elder estate. At that time I was looking for a copy of Elder's Peter Mougey sale, but he did not have that one. I did not ask him which catalogues of Elder he did have. Now I wish I had!

I remember that around this time the Katens had an auction at a coin show in Stanton, Virginia. I looked at the map, and it didn't look too far.

I started to drive down I-81 south, and kept driving and driving. I did not think I would ever get there. It was much farther than I thought.

Another time, Frank announced at an auction that he would be at a coin show in the Lancaster, Pennsylvania, area the next weekend. I decided to attend. I do not remember if I bought anything there, but I remember it because it was there that I met Wayne Homren for the first time. This was the beginning of a warm friendship that remains to this day. Some years after this, Wayne and John Burns came to my home and spent an afternoon looking at my numismatic library. Then my wife Mollie and I accompanied Wayne and John to visit the Katens.

Frank and Laurese entertained us with a fine dinner at a restaurant. Then we returned to the Katens' home to view Frank's numismatic treasures. I remember that he had a set of individual issues, unbound, of Crosby's *Early Coins of America*. An incident happened there that makes me smile when I recall it. Laurese had a schnauzer, a show dog (I believe it was pictured on the cover of one of their catalogues). John Burns put out his hand to pat it. I knew a couple that had a similar dog, and every time I visited them, it tried to bite me, so I said "John, be careful; those dogs bite." Just then the dog nipped John's hand. Laurese was flabbergasted. She said, "I have shown that dog. He has never bitten anyone." I said, "See, John, I told you those dogs bite."

In the late 1970s the Katens acquired and auctioned the Wylie hoard of auction catalogues. This was a bonanza for me because I was actively collecting auction catalogues, and still am. An added advantage was the fact that this hoard had multiple duplicates of many sales. If an underbidder's bid was in the ballpark, he was awarded one of the duplicates. When the catalogue of the 45th sale arrived, I made plans to attend the Saturday session. I had my heart set on getting the 1851 Roper sale, which was listed under the auctioneer M. Thomas and Sons. I considered it to be the first real coin sale in America, and of great historical value. It was estimated at \$65, but I was sure it would go higher. When the bidding on it started one other floor bidder bid against me, but he dropped out at \$90, and I got it for \$95. I was very happy.

At this same session I purchased catalogues of Steigerwalt, Strobebridge, Wayte Raymond, and Woodward. I purchased a large-paper copy of the Finnoti collection, and also the Mickley sale for \$140. Later, when he would give talks on the Wylie hoard, Frank would mention that lot as one of the highlights. Unfortunately I could not stay for the Saturday

afternoon session because I had guests coming to my home.

During the 1980s the Katens held sales at hotels around the Washington beltway. At one sale I walked into the hotel lobby and an arriving group caught my eye. They were all amazingly tall, almost as if they were on stilts. They were a pro basketball team.

I became acquainted with some of the regular attendees at these sales. John Hoffman was always there, usually with his friend Gordon Frost from New York. Others included Harrington Manville, an expert on things British who bid for others, usually getting three or four bidder numbers; Phil Carrigan, who has become a very enthusiastic literature collector and a very good friend; and the partners from Money Tree, Ken Lowe and Myron Xenos. Ken absolutely loved numismatic literature. His early death was a tragedy for numismatic-literature collecting.

In the 1990s, though still spry at 90-plus years of age, Frank decided to wind down his business with a series of sales of his own material. These were sales 76–81. I attended all these sales except one. That was due to weather, icy roads. I was a successful bidder at all these sales. Some of these sales had thousands of lots, so Frank devised a interesting way to make sure the sale did not drag on. At the first lot of each page, Frank would ask if any of the floor bidders were interested in any lot on that page? If so, he would open those lots, if not, on to the next page. This helped the sale move right along. In sale 77 there was a sleeper. It was the *Catalogue of Tokens Circulating during the Rebellion of 1861* by Pliny E. Chase. It was only estimated at \$5. It went to Ken Lowe for \$60. I have to admit that I was napping on that lot, but I doubt if I could have outbid Ken. This rare catalogue now resides in a Virginia collection. It has since sold for over \$1000.

Sales 80 and 81 were auction catalogues, both world and U.S. During sale 80 a bidder arrived midway through the sale. He said that he was interested in some lots that already had been sold, and asked if they could be reopened. After some discussion it was agreed to. I thought to myself, "Let him try to open a lot that I bought. That is not going to happen." The first four or five lots he asked for were reopened, and the new bidder topped the mail bid. On the next lot he asked for, Laurese, who was the clerk, said, "Oh no, that lot was sold on the floor. We can't reopen that one." Upon hearing this, the new bidder became angry, and said if he could not bid on everything he wanted, then he did not want any of the lots he had purchased. This caused quite a stir in the auction room, as

the Katens had already gone the extra mile for him to begin with. After much time and discussion, it was finally agreed to let him withdraw his bids. In this sale were bound volumes of Katen sales. I purchased several, including Katen's 28th sale, the only truly rare Katen sale.

As the time for the 81st sale approached, I was excited. I was especially interested in the Woodward sales. One lot offered his 92nd sale, considered his second rarest. (In my opinion, though, his 74th and 76th sales would give it a run.) I went to the lot viewing before the sale. I was disappointed with the condition of the 92nd sale. It was taped and quite beat up. I decided not to bid on it. It went to a mail bidder. I wonder what he thought when he opened up his package and saw that catalogue.

After the first session of the 81st sale, I came home a bit disappointed. Ken Lowe was there, and he and I seemed to be interested in the same lots. He had the determination and the financial wherewithal not to take his hand down until he had won the lot. I bought very little. However, the next day's session was a different story. I was very successful. I bought more than thirty lots of Stack's, Steigerwalt, Adolph Weyl, and Woodward, including two plated catalogues.

One Woodward item I purchased was quite rare, although neither I nor the other bidders realized how rare because I bought it for a nominal bid. It was a four-page stand-alone addendum to his 91st sale. I later showed it to Armand Champa, who said he had never seen it. Although there are probably more copies somewhere, I only know of one other.

The Katens offered bound copies of their 76th–81st sales to subscribers. When these arrived from the printer, they held a reception, where subscribers could pick up their copies. I had a very good time, enjoying the conversation with fellow bibliophiles and delicious refreshments. I thought this was a fitting climax to my experiences with the Katens.

Answers to the Numismatic Quarterly Quiz (see p. 36): 1) Coin-aligned pieces have a reverse rotated 180° rotated from the obverse; medal-aligned pieces show both sides in the same alignment. 2) 1484, Austria, Archduke Sigismund. 3) 0%; German silver is nickel, copper, and zinc. 4) Teresa Cafarelli DeFrancisci, wife of the designer. The coin lost much of its beauty in 1922 when it was reconfigured due to stacking difficulties. 5) Mule. 6) Usually, a dollar bill signed by comrades. 7) The 1917 Standing Liberty Quarter. 8) Henry VIII. 9) The law of 1857, which also abolished the half cent and reduced the size of the U.S. cent. 10) A January fire caused a cessation of coining at the Mint. 11) Fingers. Check your Bust coinage for fingerprints!!! 12) Fleur-de-coin, French for flower of the die. Referring as a rule to proof coins, or coins which are absolutely flawless.

## List of Issues of *The Asylum* by Volume and Number, 1980–2010

*Editor's note:* In response to some recent queries about the numbering and dates of past issues of *The Asylum*, Joel Orosz has kindly compiled this list of all issues published so far, in order to clarify the sometimes erratic correlation of volumes to dates.

|          |                                                                                      |
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| Volume 1 | No. 1: Summer 1980<br>Nos. 2 & 3: Fall–Winter 1980<br>No. 4: Summer 1981             |
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| Volume 3 | No. 1: Spring 1985<br>No. 2: Summer 1985<br>Nos. 3 & 4: Fall–Winter 1985             |
| Volume 4 | Nos. 1 & 2: Spring–Summer 1986<br>No. 3: Autumn 1986<br>No. 4: Winter 1986           |
| Volume 5 | No. 1: Spring 1987<br>No. 2: Summer 1987<br>No. 3: Autumn 1987<br>No. 4: Winter 1987 |
| Volume 6 | No. 1: Spring 1988<br>No. 2: Summer 1988<br>No. 3: Autumn 1988<br>No. 4: Winter 1988 |
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- Volume 15     No. 1: Winter 1997 (Two varieties, one missing pp. 3-4,  
                          the other complete)  
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| Volume 23 | No. 1: Winter 2005                                       |
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| Volume 24 | No. 1: (no season recorded) 2006 (consecutive issue #93) |

No. 2: (no season recorded) 2006 (consecutive issue #94)

Volume 25      No. 1: Winter 2007 (consecutive issue #95)  
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Volume 27      No. 1: January–March 2009  
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Volume 28      No. 1: January–March 2010  
                    No. 2: April–June 2010  
                    No. 3–4: July–December 2010

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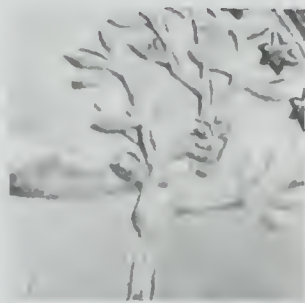
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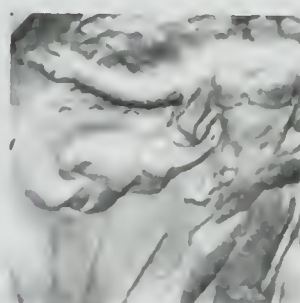
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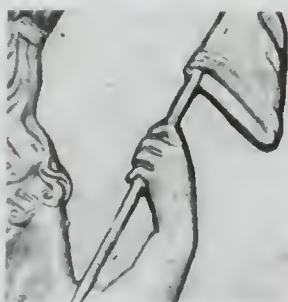
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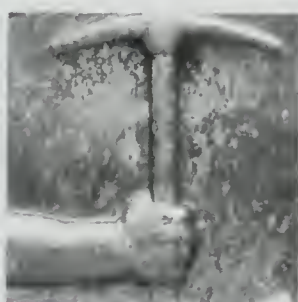
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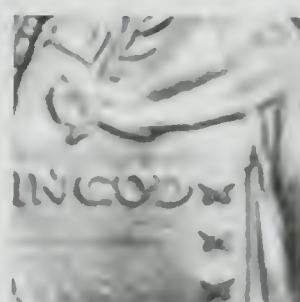
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